

## **Puget Sound Bull Trout the Unrecognized Anadromous Salmonid of the Pacific Northwest**

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Bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) are one of only three federally listed fish species that are found in the estuarine and marine waters of Puget Sound and the Pacific Coast of Washington. Until 1980, bull trout were considered the inland version of Dolly Varden (*S. malma*), and unrecognized as an anadromous salmonid. In the Puget Sound and Pacific Coast, recent studies have shown bull trout are anadromous, inhabiting estuarine and nearshore marine waters for up to 4 months each year, returning to these waters every year for multiple years. Bull trout are recognized as an apex predator in river and estuarine waters and can show a wide array of behaviors in their search for available prey, which can include juvenile salmon and forage fish such as surf smelt, sand lance and herring. We have developed a regional acoustic telemetry array that covers four river deltas, and over 200 km of NE Puget Sound nearshore marine shoreline. This array permits us to track individual fish at individual shoreline areas as well as along long migratory pathways. We will present results from the first three years of a multiyear study investigating the ecology - behavior, habitat use, and diet of bull trout in estuarine and nearshore marine waters of western Washington.